THE FAIRY BRIDE

By

NORREYS JEPHSON O'CONOR

THE UNION
SALEM, ORE.

THE FAIRY BRIDE

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

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THE FAIRY BRIDE

A Play in Three Acts

BY

NORREYS JEPHSON O'CONOR

With Music
Composed and Arranged
By
ELLIOTT SCHENCK

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TO

THE OTHER PILGRIM

The cares of the world to the world belong;
But Love is ours alway;
While the stars go out,
And the moon sinks down,
And day comes after day.

And by our love shall we be made immortal.

PREFACE

The theme of the following play is that of the poem of the same name published in my last volume, "Beside the Blackwater." The idea of a blemished king who cannot reign, and the visit of a mortal to the Fairy other-world, are both common in early Irish literature; and it is a portion of the beauty and charm of this literature that I have endeavored to enshrine. My attempt has been to write an acting play, not merely closet drama; therefore, while preserving certain characteristics of the early Irish style in writing, I have sought to use language that will be intelligible to a modern audience and modern readers, particularly children who are already reading in school the plays of Shakspere. The plot of "The Fairy Bride" is not intricate, and the stage settings should be easy to arrange. In the Appendix I have suggested an alternative setting for the second act, in case the outdoor scene should not be

feasible. I trust the play may often be acted and read in connection with the English instruction in our schools and colleges, forming an introduction to the Celtic imagination which, through so many years, has enriched English literature. Should some readers turn to early Irish literature itself, I shall feel that my work has not been in vain.

N. J. O'C.

PERSONS OF THE PLAY

KING FERGUS
QUEEN BUAN
DERMOT, *her step-son*
CONNLA, *her son*
DONN, *chamberlain to Fergus*
CUNEDDA, *a prince of Britain*
DOMNALL, *a countryman*
KING OF THE FAIRIES
ETHNE, *his daughter*
DRUIDS, NOBLES, SERVANTS, FAIRY QUEEN, FAIRIES
PLACE: *Ireland*
TIME: *Before the introduction of Christianity*

NOTE: *Information concerning costume, etc., may be found in "A Social History of Ancient Ireland," by P. W. Joyce.*

Complete parts of the music may be obtained from Mr. Elliott Schenck, care of John Lane Company, New York City.

SCENES OF THE PLAY

ACT I

The Great Hall of the Palace of King Fergus, at Dun Faithci

ACT II

The Fairy Other-world.

ACT III

Same as Act I.

THE FAIRY BRIDE

ACT I

SCENE: *The great hall of the palace of* KING FERGUS, *at Dun Faithci. At the right a dais with two thrones, on the right of which a window, on the left a door leading into the open air. A door, right, leading to the royal apartments; on the left two doors, that in the back leading to the rooms of the* PRINCES, *that in the foreground to the rooms of* NOBLES *of the court, etc. A horn on the wall, left. Stools, etc., about the hall. As the curtain rises,* DONN *enters, left front, and meets* SERVANT, *who enters back.*

SERVANT

A stranger without asks refreshment for himself and for his steed, O Donn!

DONN

Bid him enter.

[SERVANT *goes out, back, and returns with* CUNEDDA.]

Welcome art thou to the hospitality of this house, O stranger! Whence art thou come?

CUNEDDA

I come from Britain, and my name is Cunedda, son to King Urien. My father sends me to Tara to the High King's court, there to learn the duties of a king; for none more famed than are the Irish Druids. Far have I journeyed, and my steed is weary. I would rest me a day. In whose hall am I?

DONN

In that of Fergus, King of all the lands thou seest down to Inver Caragh. Welcome art thou indeed.

[*To* SERVANT.]

See to the Prince's steed.

[SERVANT *goes out, back.*]

DONN

Fortunate thy coming on this day.

CUNEDDA

Why so?

DONN

To-day the King has summoned all the nobles of the court, and first of all the Druids, to this hall, here to choose one who will follow him upon the throne.

CUNEDDA

Has the King no son?

DONN

Two, born of different mothers. As the custom is, they are considered first as heirs to the throne. Whoever has the nobles' voice is brought before the Druids, who examine him; for no king may reign who bears a blemish either in his person or his mind. Not only must he know the stories taught him by the Druids, but must be skilled in war; and, were he blemished, he could lead neither in the field nor at the council-board.

CUNEDDA

Even so. Which son will be the nobles' choice?

DONN

Dermot, the elder, son to our former queen. Well is he loved, and learnèd not only in the Druid studies and the art of war, but is generous and loving, eager in the chase. His brother, Connla, no less learnèd, but more sullen; not given to company nor sport, though able in the art of war. He, it is said, is skilled in craft, and favored, as thou mayest well surmise, by his mother and our present queen.

CUNEDDA

Can she persuade the nobles, then, to change their choice?

DONN

'Tis said that she will stop at naught; and (I must whisper, for the walls have ears) that she is in league with evil powers, Balor and the spirits of the air, enemies of the Fairies and all the powers of good. She has made use of gold, so rumor says, and there's a party 'mongst the

nobles who will raise their voices in Prince Connla's favor. Some fear that Queen Buan may even attempt mischief with Prince Dermot's person.

CUNEDDA

Indeed I have arrived at a most fortunate time. When will the ceremony take place?

[*Enter* SERVANT, *back.*]

DONN

Within an hour's time.

[*To* SERVANT.]

What wouldest thou?

SERVANT

A countryman, O Donn, waits without, and asks to see the Queen.

DONN

His name?

SERVANT

Domnall.

DONN

She told me he would come. Bid him enter.

[SERVANT *goes to door, back, and beckons to* DOMNALL, *who enters.*]

[*To* CUNEDDA.]

The servant will show thee to thy chamber. If thou returnest, I shall present thee to the King before the ceremony.

[*To* SERVANT.]

Conduct Prince Cunedda to the stranger's room, and see him properly attended.

[*To* DOMNALL.]

I go to tell the Queen that thou art here.

[SERVANT *and* CUNEDDA *go out, left front;* DONN, *right; while* DOMNALL *goes to window and looks out.*]

DOMNALL

It is the time she said; the sun is just above the summit of the hill. I must have done a weighty service, since she offered me three cows.

[*Enter* QUEEN BUAN *and* DONN, *right.*]

QUEEN

[*To* Donn.]
Thou art dismissed.
[*He bows, and goes out, left front.*]
[*To* Domnall.]
Hast thou performed my bidding?

DOMNALL

All that thou asked is done, O Queen!

QUEEN

Didst mix the potion with Prince Dermot's drink?

DOMNALL

All the phial that thou gavest me.

QUEEN

When and where?

DOMNALL

Three days ago I attended the Prince upon the chase that went across the green Plain of the Kings and up the slope of Royal Mountain. Well ran the boar that day, and loud the baying

of the sweet-tongued hounds. We paused for rest beside a spring within a cool green glade. My task it was to mix the drink for those who shared in the chase; and in Prince Dermot's mead I poured what thou gavest me, O Queen!

QUEEN

[*Joyfully.*]

Then is Prince Dermot doomed. To-day he will appear blemished before the Druids; for his skin will turn brown as a leaf in autumn. Well hast thou served me, man, and thou shalt not lack reward. Three cows are thine from out the royal herd.

[*She claps her hands and* SERVANT *appears, left front. Then she takes a necklace from round her throat and gives it to* DOMNALL.]

Take this necklace from one who would be called a grateful Queen.

[*To* SERVANT.]

Lead this man before my steward, and tell Kian my will is the countryman should have three cows from mine own herd.

DOMNALL

A hundred thousand thanks, O Queen; and all the blessings of the gods poured out upon thee!

[SERVANT *and* DOMNALL *go out, back, as* DONN *and* CUNEDDA *enter from left front.*]

DONN

The time is here for the choosing of the heir to the throne, O Queen! This is Cunedda, son to King Urien of Britain. He journeys to Tara to learn the duties of a king.

[DONN *presents* CUNEDDA *to the* QUEEN.]

QUEEN

Welcome art thou, O Prince, to the hospitality of this house!

CUNEDDA

My thanks, and blessings of the gods upon thee!

DONN

I go to call the King.

QUEEN

Stay; for he comes attended by the Druids.
[*Enter* FERGUS *attended by two* DRUIDS.]

KING

Summon, O Donn, the nobles for the ceremony. Come with me, O Buan, to thy throne!
[*While* DONN *takes the horn from the wall, left, goes to door, back, opens it, and sounds a call,* KING FERGUS *and* QUEEN BUAN *take their places on the two thrones, at the right of which stand the* DRUIDS. *From the door at back and that at the left front, enter the several* NOBLES *of the court, each bowing to the* KING *and* QUEEN *as he takes his place. As they are gathering,* DONN *presents* CUNEDDA *to* KING FERGUS.]

DONN

O King, this Prince, son to King Urien of Britain, craved the hospitality of thy house today for himself and for his steed; and in thy name I bade him welcome.

KING

Thou hast done well.

[*To* CUNEDDA.]

Welcome again I bid thee. Whither journeyest thou?

CUNEDDA

To Tara, to the Druids of the royal court, from them to learn the duties of a king.

KING

Victory and blessing upon thee!

[CUNEDDA *bows and retires. By this time the* NOBLES *have gathered.*]

KING

Well do ye know why I have summoned ye, O nobles!

[*To* DONN.]

Go, and bring the Princes hither.

[DONN *goes out by door, left back.*]

[*To* NOBLES.]

I am grown weary of the kingship, and would have one succeed me on the throne. As the powers of a king are in your hands, I have

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called ye hither to name a prince to follow me. Remember he must be of royal race; that my sons are learnèd in the arts of war and peace, and, as children of the present king, have claim to the first choice. The Druids here will give assurance that the prince ye name bears no blemish in person or in mind. Now, I charge ye, speak!

FIRST NOBLE

I name as King Prince Dermot.

[*A murmur of approval among most of the* NOBLES.]

SECOND NOBLE

And I Prince Connla.

[*A few of the* NOBLES *give shouts of approval, but there are also cries of, "It may not be!"*]

THIRD NOBLE

See where the Princes come!

[*All the* NOBLES *turn to look where* DONN *enters, left back, followed by the two* PRINCES. PRINCE DERMOT *walks first, his skin turned brown and his head*

bowed in sorrow. His step is slow and halting. After him comes PRINCE CONNLA, *head erect and glancing joyfully about him. He walks with proud step. The* NOBLES *give a subdued cry of horror as they notice* PRINCE DERMOT'S *plight, and fall back on either side, leaving a lane along which the* PRINCES *advance towards the throne. The* KING, *who has leaned forward eagerly at the entrance of the* PRINCES, *sinks back dejected.*]

SECOND NOBLE

He is blemished and he cannot reign!

FIRST NOBLE

A judgment, O Druids!

THIRD NOBLE

Prince Connla is now the nobles' choice!

[*The Princes have now halted before the throne.* QUEEN BUAN *looks upon them with sparkling eyes.* KING FERGUS *slowly raises his head, which has been bowed upon his breast.*]

KING

[*To* DERMOT.]

When did thine affliction come upon thee, O Dermot?

DERMOT

I looked this morning in the pool and saw my flesh as it is now. Last night, ere I slept, my head was fevered, and I dreamed fitful dreams.

QUEEN

Thou hast two sons, O King, and one is well!

KING

Peace, woman!

[*He is silent and rests his head on his hand.*]

SECOND NOBLE

We would make our choice, O King!

FIRST NOBLE

Ill were it should Dermot thus be made to lose the throne. I would that time were given for his healing.

THIRD NOBLE

Yet Prince Connla is well, and as learnèd and as skilled as is Prince Dermot. The King grows old and would know who will succeed him.

KING

[*Rousing himself from his gloomy thoughts.*]

Peace to your chattering tongues! I ask the Druids now for judgment of Prince Dermot.

FIRST DRUID

O King, he cannot reign! Plain is the blemish which he bears, and clearly understood the law.

QUEEN

[*To* FERGUS.]

Bid them choose Prince Connla.

KING

I cannot slight mine eldest son, whom I have taught the art of war, and loved not only for himself but for his mother's sake. Long have

I dreamed to see him monarch in my stead. O nobles, I would give justice to Prince Dermot!

DONN

His sickness may be brought about by evil powers. There is sorcery in the land.

QUEEN

Yet the law is, he who is blemished cannot reign.

[*To* Fergus.]

Look on Connla, he is strong and well! I have loved thee long and taught my son to follow thee in word and deed.

KING

[*In a steady voice, though betraying emotion.*]

Nobles, I will give a time to Dermot for his healing! It may well be that witchcraft has brought sickness on my son. My shame it were forever, should I let such misadventure keep him from the throne to which his birth, his learning and his age entitle him. One year, O Der-

mot, do I give thee to find a leech to cure thy sickness. Travel where thou wilt in all the world; but in a year, when once again the sun is risen half above the hill, I bid the nobles and the Druids here assemble, and I charge thee come before them! Then shall they choose; and then their choice shall not be changed. If then thou art not well, Prince Connla, or whoever else the nobles choose, shall follow me upon the throne. O men, do I do well?

[*Most of the* NOBLES *cry, "It is well done!" although a few declare, "It is not well; uphold the law!" but their voices are drowned in the general approval.* QUEEN BUAN *catches the* KING *by the sleeve and starts to speak; but he rises, casting off her hand.*]

KING

Ye are dismissed, O men; forget not this day year! Take, O Dermot, whatsoever thou wishest for thy journey, and the blessing of a father and the gods be poured upon thee; victory and healing be thine! Attend me, Buan.

[KING FERGUS *sweeps from the hall, right, followed by* QUEEN BUAN, *who looks*

meaningly towards CONNLA, *who is now somewhat dejected.* DERMOT *is more cheerful. He remains motionless while the* NOBLES *leave the hall as they entered it,* PRINCE CONNLA *joining those who go out at back. When they are gone,* DERMOT *covers his face with his hands, half in sorrow and half in thought, and sits down on the step of the dais on which are the two thrones. The door at the back opens, and on the threshold appears a maiden,* ETHNE, *dressed in green and wearing a golden crown. In her hand a wand hung with bells. She stands an instant in the doorway, unseen by* PRINCE DERMOT, *then advances towards him. When she is near him, she speaks.*]

ETHNE

Tell me, O Prince, the reason for thy grief!

DERMOT

[*Lifting his head from his hands, and looking in wonder and admiration on* ETHNE.]

Whence art thou come, vision of delight? I look into thine eyes and see worlds undreamed of, and my thoughts are in a maze.

ETHNE

Once more I ask what troubles thee, O Prince?

DERMOT

Maiden, I am sick at heart; for the purpose of my life is ended. Look upon me; see my brown skin, the blemish that has come to keep me from my father's throne,—I who was born to be a prince and king! Well must thou know none who bears a blemish on his person may reign. My father, King of all these lands, is far advanced in years, and would renounce the throne; and I, who should succeed him, help him in his gathering age, who else had been chosen by the nobles, must give up my right because of sickness.

ETHNE

When did the sorrow come upon thee, Prince?

DERMOT

This day, as I went to bathe in the depths of yonder pool, I saw myself mirrored on its surface. My skin had lost the ruddy glow of health, and had become as now thou seest it.

ETHNE

Canst find no reason for thy wretchedness?

DERMOT

None. I have done naught out of order in my daily life. I have attended to the duties of a prince; practised the arts of war: thrown the javelin, wielded the sling and sword. As befits a kindly prince, I led the nobles in the chase. Three days past, we sought the boar upon the slopes of Royal Mountain. There we paused for rest, and, as is my wont, I drank but sparingly of mead; too much wine confuses in the chase.

ETHNE

Didst know the man who mixed thy horn of mead?

DERMOT

Domnall, a countryman who dwells in the Dark Valley. Once was he servant to the Queen, my stepmother; and by his service won the land on which he lives. He has attended me ere this, when Cailte, my chosen huntsman, has not been well.

[*Musing.*]

I have heard rumors that the Queen is skilled in witchcraft; yet scarcely have faith she would dare outrage on my person; she loves the King, my father, far too well.

ETHNE

Most trusting Prince! Dost not know a mother's love
Exceeds the love and service of a wife?
Well is it I am hither come to show
The folly of thy trust. The Queen has borne
Thee hatred; through her servant and the powers
Of evil in the world, has done thee harm.
But I am here across the tossing sea
And all the mountain-peaks of lovely Erin,

To bring thee healing from another world.
I loved thee from afar, and I have known
The net of witchcraft that has drawn around thee.
Look now and see, reading the hearts of men!

[*She waves the wand with little bells over* DERMOT. *A look of horror comes into his face, and he covers his eyes.*]

DERMOT

I see! I see! And now I know the blackness of the heart of her I thought once loved me. Well do I read the spells of the powers of darkness, and know that in the glade upon the slope of Royal Mountain I drank to mine own doom. O damsel, sent me by the powers of good, and flashing in the Fairy color, green; what may I do to overcome my fate?

ETHNE

Come with me to another world
Over the hills and the sea:
To an island home by the waves encurled,
A golden palace with roof impearled,
And columns of porphyry.

DERMOT

O Lady, I follow; for now I know the end of all earthly desire since I know love.

ETHNE

Ride with me on my snow-white steed
  Born of the wind-blown foam,
To the cool green grass of a Fairy mead,
The joyous life that the Fairies lead
  In their distant Fairy home.

There will they bring thee balm for thine ill:
  Apples of silver and gold
Crushed and pounded; a drink to fill
A golden goblet; a drink to still
  Men's sufferings manifold.

DERMOT

Belovèd, I go with thee for my healing.
  [*He takes* Ethne *in his arms.*]
Truly, I am beyond the world. Lead on!

ETHNE

Come where, Time forgotten, Love is all.
There are my sisters, waiting on the shore
Beside the little waves that break in foam
Upon the sanded beach. They'll welcome us;
And we shall rest above the singing sea,
Or walk along the meadows hand in hand,
And in the night-time watch the orange moon
Set in dark clouds, play with a silver sea.

DERMOT

Belovèd, come!

[*They go out back, and as they go the stage darkens as though the sun had gone under a cloud. From without, the voice of* ETHNE *dying away in the distance as the curtain falls.*]

ETHNE

Come with me to another world
Over the hills and the sea:
To an island home by the waves encurled,
A golden palace with roof impearled,
And columns of porphyry.

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE: *The Fairy other-world. The stage represents a glade at the edge of a wood. At the back an expanse of meadow, with a glimpse of sea in the far distance. There are two entrances on either side of the stage, one at the back and one at the front. There is a grassy seat under a tree, left, large enough to be used as a throne by the* FAIRY KING *and* QUEEN. *The Fairies who appear in this act are, in accordance with Irish tradition, of the size of ordinary human beings, unless the contrary is specified. They should all be dressed in green. When the curtain rises, it is early morning, shortly after sunrise.* DECHTIRE, *a* FAIRY *maiden, runs on to the stage from left back.*

DECHTIRE

Away! The sun has put his golden glance
Upon the sleeping sea. Away, away!

[*Enter* FLANN, *a* FAIRY, *left back.*]

FLANN

Whither, O maiden, wilt thou fly so fast?

DECHTIRE

To the green hills of Erin, and her leafy glades.
Hast thou no work to do 'mongst mortal men?

FLANN

I lend a king my sword and Fairy strength.

DECHTIRE

Now must we hasten; for 'tis said the Prince
Whom Ethne brought from Erin, seeks to-day
His father's kingdom. We are summoned hither
By King's command to grace his hour of going.

FLANN

We must be swift. The Fairy gates
Are open, and the charger waits!

[*They hasten off, right front.* DERMOT, *cured of his sickness, and* ETHNE, *enter, left front.*]

ETHNE

Wilt thou persist then in thy purpose, thus
To leave her who has healed thee, and has won
Thy love; thy comrades, too, in Fairyland?
Hast thou not found that these our Fairy ways
Are better than the round of mortal life?

DERMOT

Belovèd Ethne, only happiness have I known since the day thou camest to my father's hall and took me with thee back to Fairyland. Swiftly has my sickness gone, and I have rejoiced in the long days I have passed with thee, thy brothers and sisters on the meadows; but I have duties as a prince.

ETHNE

Yet youth is made for love, and in this land
Youth lives forever. Why wilt thou seek the cares
That crowd on mortal kings: the din of war,
And all the many trials of a state?
Scarce a month thou hast been with me; the days
Have slipp'd like pearls along a slender string.

DERMOT

Time has been short indeed; but I have gained strength of body and soul. Both thou gavest me: the one with thy potions and thy healing hands, the other with thy love; and I would go, as every man must wish to go, and show the strength of this, thy love, to all the world.

ETHNE

That which it may not understand, why show
The world, when here we know the worth of love?

DERMOT

But should I let my father grieve? He reared me for my life's work, and the day I was to help him bear the burden with the strength of youthful years, that strength was taken from him. Lonely he sits in hall; now that health is come again, should I not seek him, tell him I am well?

ETHNE

I fear thy going; slowly run the sands
Down through the hour-glass here in Fairyland.

DERMOT

Still must I go. But I will come again to claim thee. Thou knowest that I love thee, and thy father has promised I may return and take thee as my bride back to green Dun Faithci.

ETHNE

Even now I fear; for in the world of men
Are many pleasures, love but one of them.

DERMOT

Canst doubt me thus? Dost thou not know that I have longed for love; for one to help me on the difficult days, when I am weary with the little things of life? I never knew my mother; all the love I should have given her is thine.

ETHNE

[*Clinging to him.*]
Go not! Some maiden in the mortal world
May win thy love by giving thee the joys
Of home, and by the fireside thou'lt forget
Thy Fairy lover; unless at sunlight time
The laughter of thy children in the fields
Recalls the meadows of this happy isle.

DERMOT

I am not such. Love for me is not so lightsome. I have promised to return and wed thee, and I can follow the star of Love until the time when thou shalt give me all my heart can wish.

ETHNE

If thou wilt stay, I'll give thee all things now.

DERMOT

[*Breaking gently from her restraining hands and taking her in his arms.*]

Peace to thy fears, Belovèd! I know my duty, and looking in thine eyes I find the strength to do it. I must gladden my father; show him I too know how to rule. Swiftly the days will pass, and soon my steed will turn to Fairyland.

[ETHNE *claps her hands, and* FAND, *her handmaiden, enters, left back.*]

ETHNE

[*Sadly, to* FAND.]

Bring my bugle horn.

[FAND *goes out, left back.*]

[*To* Dermot.]

Since, Dermot, thou art firm,
One gift have I beside my love to give thee:
The horn which oft has sounded in the glades
Of green-hilled Erin, when the cavalcade
Of Fairies rode through the forest in the chase.
Sweet are its tones, and sweetly have they sung
Joy to the huntsman, terror to the boar.
Seldom have mortals heard its silver voice;
Then only children, poets, and the men
Who love or sorrow—they alone can hear
The unseen voices from across the world.

[Fand *enters, left back, bearing a bugle horn hung from a green and silver baldric.*]

FAND

Here, Ethne, is the horn thy father gave thee.

ETHNE

To thee my thanks.

[*To* Dermot.]

Take thou this horn, O Dermot,
And when thou findst thyself in need blow thrice
Thereon. Straightway will I appear and bring
Courage and counsel out of Fairyland.

DERMOT

[*Putting the baldric about him.*]

I shall wear the horn, Belovèd, as a gage of thy true love. Never will I lack it in chase or war.

ETHNE

I charge thee blow it only in thy need,
Not for thy pleasure; for I may not come
To the light summons of a lovers' tryst.

DERMOT

I shall give heed unto thy counsel.

[*Enter a small* FAIRY, *left back.*]

FAIRY

Hail, mortal Prince! The King draws nigh
With all the pomp of Faëry,
To wish thee good luck and good-bye!

[*A sound of music without, and the* FAIRY KING *and* QUEEN *enter, left back, with their train. Several small* FAIRIES *go in front of them scattering flowers. Others shake wands hung with silver*

bells, and one or two have harps in their hands. The KING *and* QUEEN *take their places on the grassy seat, while the* FAIRIES *sing or chant the song which follows.*]

FAIRIES

Hither comes the Fairy train
Round the royal throne again.
Strike the harp and shake the bells;
Weave a web of Fairy spells:
Colors from the rainbow caught,
Music with Love's lightness fraught,
Song far sweeter than the bird,
Or deep voice in the sea-shell heard.
Come, and with your merry play
Make a Fairy holiday!

[*When the* KING *and* QUEEN *are seated, the* FAIRIES, *divided into two groups, join hands and dance in front of the throne.*]

FIRST GROUP OF FAIRIES

Hither comes the Fairy train
Round the royal throne again.

SECOND GROUP OF FAIRIES

Come, and with your merry play
Make a Fairy holiday!

[*The* FAIRIES *dance and play merrily for some minutes. A few of them stop at last and speak as follows, the others continuing their play and dancing.*]

FIRST FAIRY

Hail to the Fairy King!

SECOND FAIRY

Hail to the loveliest of immortal women!

THIRD FAIRY

Hail to the mortal Prince!

[DERMOT *and* ETHNE *have stood a little apart during the rollicking. When the* KING *raises his sceptre to stop the merriment, they are, however, in the front rank of the Fairies.*]

KING

Peace to your laughter, though it glads my heart.
Companions in Fairyland; subjects of my crown!
I called ye hither from the flowery meads,
The sandy margent of the azure sea,
And dearer duties in the distant world,
Where ye were gone to heal the sick in mind
Or body, to bring them here, perchance, for rest:
I summoned ye to tell ye that our guest,
The mortal prince whom Ethne brought and healed
With all the cunning skill that makes her best
Among her sisters of the royal house—
This Dermot is determined he will leave
Our pleasure and our play, to seek the world
Once more: not led thereto for any lack
In gratitude, but duty to his king
And father, who rear'd his eldest son to reign.
Ye know how Buan with malicious wiles
Brought sickness on him which at last is healed.

FIRST FAIRY

We know the wicked Queen who leagues herself
With spirits of the air, our enemies.

SECOND FAIRY

Aye, and we would confound her utterly!

KING

Stand forth, Prince Dermot! I would give thee now
My blessing, and a gift from Fairyland.
[DERMOT *comes before the throne.*]

DERMOT

I am here, O King!

KING

Bring me the Fairy sword.
[*A Fairy brings a sword in a beautifully embroidered scabbard and gives it to the* KING.]
This sword, O Dermot,
Was wrought by Fairy smiths on golden anvils;
The scabbard broidered by the slender hands

Of Ethne's sisters. Naught can withstand the blade—
Nor rock, nor toughness of the forest oak.
Read now the letters we have writ thereon.

[*He gives the sword to* DERMOT, *who draws the blade from the scabbard.*]

DERMOT

[*Reading.*]
"Be patient." Thanks, O King, both for the gift and for the counsel!

KING

Patience is the toughness of the mind and heart;
The test of finer natures, that most surely wins
Through all the conflicts of the mortal world.
Wield well the sword; for it shall never fail.
Yet bear it only in a righteous cause;
Then will it flash in air as fire of lightning;
But, drawn to baser uses, dully gleam.

DERMOT

My thanks again, O King! Now would I bid ye all farewell, comrades of Fairyland! But ere I ride across the murmuring, tranquil sea back

to green Erin, I would ask again that which I asked before, and won thy kind consent; for I would have those words the last I hear in Fairyland.

KING

Say on! Speak freely both thy mind and heart!

DERMOT

Ethne, come hither!

[ETHNE *comes and stands beside* DERMOT.]

Well dost thou know, O King of Fairyland, thy daughter led me from my father's hall by the power of love; and, with the vision of Queen Buan's wickedness, I saw one too of perfect love. Since I know no mortal may find his way hither without thy consent, I would ask to return and claim thy daughter as my bride.

KING

Once more I grant thy wish, since Ethne loves thee.

ETHNE

And have loved him from the morning of the world.

KING

Yet I must charge thee, as thou wouldst return,
To touch no wine until the sun is set
Upon the day that sees thee back again
In green Dun Faithci; till the evening hour
To tell no mortal where thy sojourn was:
Else shall the Fairy steed that waits thee now
Without the forest glade, knowing the way
From Erin into Fairyland, vanish;
And though thou shalt be longing to return,
Until the world's end thou'lt not accomplish it.

DERMOT

I give my promise. I shall count the days ere I come to wed with Ethne. For all who work in the world there needs must be a place to rest and dream—that place for me is Fairyland.

[A Fairy *enters, right back.*]

FAIRY

Now, O King, the Fairy gates
Are open, and the charger waits!

DERMOT

Once more, O King, I bid thee farewell, and give thee a hundred thousand thanks for all thy kindness and thy gifts—and to ye all, my comrades! Now will I speed with joy across the singing sea back to the world.

[*To* ETHNE.]

Belovèd, farewell! Thy skill hath healed me and thy love hath made me strong! Thy presence will be with me, though unseen, until I come again.

[DERMOT *and* ETHNE *embrace.*]

KING

Remember well my words of caution, Prince!

FAIRIES

Remember well!

DERMOT

In truth I will. No word shall pass my lips where I was healed, nor will I taste wine before the sun is set on the day I see the world again.

ETHNE

Farewell, may my true love guard thee evermore!

[DERMOT *goes out, right back, the* FAIRIES *crowding up stage and waving good-bye.*]

KING

Music and song, O Fairies, to speed our guest!

[*The* FAIRIES *join hands and dance and sing the following song; going, as they sing the last verses, out at right back, leaving the* KING *and* QUEEN *seated on the throne and* ETHNE *standing on the left of it, as the curtain slowly falls.*]

FAIRIES

Join hands again in the Fairy dance,
And away to the flow'ring lea,
Where the dew is cool
On our dancing feet,
And the breeze blows fresh from the sea.

The cares of the world to the world belong;
  But Love is ours alway;
    While the stars go out,
    And the moon sinks down,
  And day comes after day.

Why reck we then of pain or woe,
  Since Love is over all;
    And Sorrow dies
    At the sight of Love,
  And Time is the lovers' thrall.

Join hands again in the Fairy dance,
  And away to the meadows free!
    Where the sun shines clear,
    And the moon comes slow
  From the breast of the crooning sea.

CURTAIN

ACT III

SCENE: *Same as Act I, after the lapse of a year. Enter* DONN, *left front, crossing to window.*

DONN

The time is almost here for the gathering of the nobles. There is no word of Prince Dermot, and the kingdom goes awry.

[*Enter* SERVANT, *back.*]

SERVANT

The British Prince who shared the hospitality of this house a year ago, craves the courtesy again, O Donn!

DONN

Bid him enter.

[SERVANT *goes out door, back, and returns with* CUNEDDA.]

CUNEDDA

Once more, O Donn, I seek the shelter of the roof of King Fergus and refreshment for myself and for my steed. I journey home from Tara.

DONN

Welcome art thou.

[*To* SERVANT.]

See to the Prince's steed.

[SERVANT *goes out, back.*]

[*To* CUNEDDA.]

Was thy sojourn happy at the High King's court?

CUNEDDA

Right royal was my entertainment, and well was I instructed in the duties of a prince. The King himself took me with him to the west; taught me the art of war. From the High Druid I learned the famous tales of Erin: of Deirdre, the beauteous maid, and the deeds of the boy champion of Ulster. I was trained too in law and custom. Now am I worthy to help my father rule.

DONN

Indeed there is no court in all the world where thou couldst have been better taught.

CUNEDDA

I would ask, O Donn, for tidings of Prince Dermot. I mind me on the day I sojourned here a year ago, he was to have been chosen heir to his father's throne. A sore affliction kept him from the nobles' choice.

DONN

The King, his father, in all love granted him a year for healing; but on that very day Prince Dermot disappeared; and there has come no word of him, nor did he take aught with him for a journey. Messengers were sent to all the courts of Erin, but none has seen him.

CUNEDDA

Thou toldest me a tale of witchcraft, if I am not at fault. The Queen, stepmother to the Prince, was rumored in league with evil powers.

DONN

In truth there has been doubt of the Queen, and yet no proof. Some say she has been heard to utter spells, though no mischief has been proved upon her. All who were with the Prince ere he vanished, are well, save only Domnall, who served him on the hunt. One day, close by the field in which he kept his cows, Domnall was found slain with a sword-thrust through the body. He attended Prince Connla in the chase; and Prince Connla is a violent man. All is most strange. Domnall once was servant to the Queen.

CUNEDDA

Since Prince Dermot is gone, do not the nobles meet around this time to choose his younger brother?

DONN

Again hast thou been happy in thy coming; for on this day, and soon, the nobles gather; but there is doubt they will choose Prince Connla.

CUNEDDA

Since he is son to the reigning King, should he not have the nobles' voice?

DONN

Thou sayest truth, and well at Tara hast thou learned the law. Yet is it but custom the nobles should choose from the household of the reigning king. "A prince of royal race" is all the law demands; and there is more than one such within the boundaries of the kingdom of Fergus.

CUNEDDA

If not Prince Connla, whom will the nobles choose; and why do they scorn the monarch's second son?

DONN

Donagh Mac Colum is favored; but there is a party for Prince Connla. I told thee once of Connla's sullen temper. Seldom has he led the nobles in the chase, and has been sparing in gifts and entertainment, save to a few—and they needs must love him well. Quick is he to wrath,

and slow to stay his hand. The death of Domnall has not served to give the nobles trust.

CUNEDDA

What news, then, of the King and Queen?

DONN

Oft Queen Buan urged the King to have the Druids and nobles name Prince Connla ere the year was gone; yet has King Fergus ever been firm. "A year I gave, and till the year is ended I shall not change," has Fergus oft replied; although the Queen has whispered that the Fairies, or mayhap evil powers, have taken Dermot, and no more will he be seen of mortal eyes.

[*Enter, right,* KING FERGUS *and* QUEEN BUAN, *attended by two* DRUIDS *and one or two* NOBLES.]

KING

O Donn, thou art in idle chatter when the time is come to bring the nobles hither.

QUEEN

The sun is half above the summit of the hill.

DONN

O King, I shall do thy bidding; but first I would present the Prince who on this day one year ago craved rest and entertainment.

CUNEDDA

Cunedda, son to Urien, King of Britain, I journey home from Tara. I ask to share thy house this day and night.

KING

Thy wish is granted. Never shall it be said that Fergus grudged comfort to a stranger. Summon, O Donn, the nobles hither! Buan, come to thy throne!

[KING FERGUS *leads* QUEEN BUAN *to her throne and seats himself beside her.* DONN *takes from the wall, left, the trumpet, as in Act I; goes to the door, back, and sounds a call. Through this*

door, and that at the left front, enter the NOBLES; *each saluting the* KING *and* QUEEN *as he takes his place. While the* NOBLES *are gathering, the* KING *and* QUEEN *speak together.*]

QUEEN

Now, O Fergus, the year is sped, and thou hast no word of Dermot. Truth did I speak in saying he was gone from mortal sight forever.

KING

And yet another is not chosen; there is still time for Dermot. O Dermot, if thou art not beyond the world, hasten and come; I long to see thee reign!

QUEEN

[*Smiling.*]

There is no answer. Thy words beat upon the air as the wings of a caged bird. Look, the nobles are now assembled; send for Prince Connla, that he may be chosen as befits the law!

KING

[*Rousing himself from reverie.*]
O Donn, go and bring Prince Connla hither!
[Donn *goes out door, left back. The* King *sinks again into reverie.*]

FIRST NOBLE

Has no word been heard, then, of Prince Dermot?

SECOND NOBLE

None; and he will no more be seen in the world. The powers of evil have him, and even now he is at the court of Balor. Choose thou Prince Connla; he is well and strong, and e'en as proper a prince as Dermot.

QUEEN

Well said.

FIRST NOBLE

My voice shall ne'er be raised for Connla. Skilled is he in the arts of war, and yet more skilled in trickery. Seldom has he led us on the hunt, or greased our knives in feasting.

And he who last went hunting with him lies underground.

SECOND NOBLE

Peace to thine insolence!

[*Showing a bracelet.*]

He gave me this not three days since. My voice is raised for Connla.

[*One or two other Nobles cry,* "PRINCE CONNLA!"]

THIRD NOBLE

Since Dermot is not here, I am for Donagh Mac Colum. Noble his lineage, and ere this his fathers have sat upon the throne. Generous is he, and eager in the chase.

[*A majority of the* NOBLES *cry,* "DONAGH MAC COLUM!" *There is some confusion, due to the* NOBLES *shouting for their favorites, which awakens the* KING *from brooding.*]

KING

Silence! This is the royal court and not the place for brawls.

DONN

[*Appearing at door, left back.*]
Way for Prince Connla!

[*The* NOBLES *are silent, and separate to allow* CONNLA, *preceded by* DONN, *to approach the throne.*]

CONNLA

I am here, O King!

KING

Once more, O nobles, are ye summoned to choose one to follow me upon the throne. The year is past I gave Prince Dermot for his healing. He is not here, nor has there come word of his welfare. Now will ye choose one in his stead to reign. The Druids will examine him, that he bears no blemish. As the custom is, I offer first Prince Connla for your choice.

[*The door at the back opens, and* DERMOT *appears on the threshold, wearing* ETHNE'S *bugle horn slung from his shoulder and the Fairy sword.*]

DERMOT

Victory and blessing of the gods upon thee, O Fergus! And on ye all, O nobles!

[*The court is astounded by the reappearance of* DERMOT *well and strong, and for a moment no one speaks.*]

FIRST NOBLE

He is come again!

DONN

And he is well once more; the glow of health is in his cheeks.

QUEEN

The Fairies have given him up.

CONNLA

The gods have turned against me.

SECOND NOBLE

Now is my favor doomed!

THIRD NOBLE

We'll make our choice in truth, O Fergus!

KING

[*Who has risen to his feet at sight of* DERMOT.]

Welcome art thou indeed, my son!

QUEEN

Welcome, forsooth, to me!

DERMOT

I am come, O Father, to tell thee I am healed. [*Looking about him.*]

Yet why do I see this gathering of men—the Druids of the court, as on the day I left thee? Thou gavest me a year for healing; and in a month I find the nobles gathered as though they would choose one to supplant me in my right by ancient custom. Wouldst give me but a month, O Father?

DONN

A month, O boy? The year has turned to autumn, and the spring is come again, since thou didst leave this hall a year ago.

DERMOT

A year!

[*Half to himself.*]

Then was that month by mortal time a year?

QUEEN

[*Aside to* CONNLA.]

See how he changes color. He has been to Fairyland, where a year seems but a month.

CONNLA

I mark him well.

KING

A year, O son! But thou art still in time. The Druids have not chosen.

DERMOT

Well am I sped. I must give thee greeting, O my Father!

[*He approaches the throne. The* KING *embraces him, as does the* QUEEN, *half-heartedly. His brother,* CONNLA, *follows suit.*]

QUEEN

I am ungracious I did not bid thee welcome long ere this. So glad was I of thy return, joy robbed me of my voice.

CONNLA

As it did me.

QUEEN

Yet I would ask thee, since thou seemest healed, in what place thou wert cured; for I would know, should any here be sick. Truly, the leech who cured thee was well skilled; for thou wert sick indeed!

DERMOT

Swiftly have I come from the court which saw my healing, and am but just in time. I ask thee, Father, bid the nobles and the Druids now give judgment. I am well, and I am fit to rule.

KING

O nobles——

QUEEN

[*Catching him by the sleeve and breaking in upon him.*]

Justice I ask, O King, before thou callest for judgment! There is no true judgment without justice.

FIRST NOBLE

We shall give justice indeed: Dermot has reappeared.

[*There are cries of* "DERMOT!" *from several* NOBLES.]

KING

[*Turning to* QUEEN, *and fiercely.*]

What wouldst thou, woman!

FIRST DRUID

She has a right to justice.

QUEEN

I ask, O King and nobles of the court, but justice for my son and for Prince Dermot! Thou hast upheld the law that none can reign

who bears a blemish. Of a sudden was Prince Dermot smitten with sickness, and there was whisper round the court of witchcraft and spells—laid at my door by some. I know ye well, O nobles, who are my friends! Then did Prince Dermot vanish, and no word from him until to-day he comes and says that he is cured. May not this, too, be witchcraft?

THIRD NOBLE

She speaks some truth.

SECOND NOBLE

She has spoken well, as must the mother of Prince Connla.

[*There is an uneasy stir among the* NOBLES.]

SECOND DRUID

In truth, O King, there is reason in what she says!

QUEEN

Since there is room for doubt, I bid thee wait, O King, to see if Dermot shall be well. In a week's time call the nobles hither.

FIRST DRUID

She asks but justice, O King!

KING

And as a just King I can but grant her plea.
[*He leans his head on his hand and again falls into a reverie.*]

QUEEN

Thy son, O King, has not yet said where he was healed; he answered, when I asked, that he came swiftly thence unto thy court.

KING

[*To* DERMOT.]
Thou hearest what the Queen says.

DERMOT

Until the sun is gone behind the hill, as now he is half gone, I will not tell my story. Then would I summon the leech who tended me.

KING

[*Rising.*]

Since ye may not choose now, O nobles, I bid ye come with me to the green without, there to hold games in honor of my son's return; and, when ye have your fill of sport, come once more within the hall to feast with me and hear Prince Dermot's story. See, O Donn, that all is well ordered.

[DONN *goes out at back.*]

NOBLES

Victory and blessing be upon thee, O Fergus!

KING

Follow me!

[*The* KING *goes out, back, followed by the* NOBLES. *The* QUEEN *and* CONNLA *linger in the hall.* DONN *reënters from back and goes out again, left foreground, from where Servants appear bringing a table which they set up in front of the throne, so that the* KING *and* QUEEN *may be at the head of the table.* DONN, *who has entered with Servants*

and given them directions, then goes out at back. Throughout the following scene the Servants are up stage, and the QUEEN *and* CONNLA *down. Occasional shouts are heard from those in the games without.*]

QUEEN

Now, O Connla, is mine hour ended, and I am overthrown. Balor and the powers of darkness assist me!

[*She paces up and down.*]

CONNLA

Mother, do not grieve, there still is hope. All is not lost. Thou sayest Dermot has been healed in Fairyland?

QUEEN

Such my belief, since he will not tell his tale till after sunset. This speaks a custom of the Fairy King, who bids those mortals who have seen the Plain of Light never to say where they have visited till sunset on the day they reach the world again; else may they nevermore see

Fairyland. All who have found it long to tell of its perfection.

CONNLA

We may not hope to make Dermot speak before the appointed time; his mind is given to the games. All I have done is vain: the death of Domnall lest he should tell thy secrets, the presents I have given to win the nobles.

QUEEN

The spells that I have woven.

[*Both the* QUEEN *and* CONNLA *are moodily silent for a moment. Then a joyous look overspreads the* QUEEN'S *countenance.*]

Though we may not keep Dermot from the throne; yet may we deprive him of the Land of Youth forever. There is another custom of the Fairy King I had well nigh forgotten. Each mortal who has been to Fairyland is charged to drink no wine before the evening of the day he is returned to earth. Through this may we trick Dermot in the coming feast and win our revenge.

CONNLA

We may indeed; for I, his loving brother, will sit beside him. Long is it since we have sat together, and my love is grown during his absence.

QUEEN

I shall take his attention at the feast by guile.

CONNLA

And when he thinks on what thou sayest, I will spill wine from out my cup upon his food.

QUEEN

And he will taste of it, and thus be doomed. We may not win the throne, but we may win his happiness!

[*By this time the Servants have made ready the table in front of the throne.* DONN *enters from back.*]

SERVANT

[*Who has been arranging table.*]
The feast is ready, O Donn!

DONN

I go to call the King.

[DONN *goes out, back.*]

QUEEN

Watch well, O son, that we miss not our chance!

CONNLA

I shall watch thee as the cat his mother.

QUEEN

Be thou as quick.

[*Enter* KING, DONN *and* NOBLES, *back.*]

KING

Welcome are ye, O nobles, at the feast! Come, O Queen, and sit beside me on the throne. Warriors and nobles, range yourselves about us!

[*The* KING *and* QUEEN *take their places and the* NOBLES *follow their example. As they seat themselves the following dialogue occurs.*]

FIRST NOBLE

Well matched were the games.

[*To* CUNEDDA.]

O Prince, thou hast learned much skill with weapons at Tara!

CUNEDDA

My thanks. Great is the prowess of the King and the warriors about him.

[*By this time the guests are seated,* DERMOT *at the right of the* KING, CUNEDDA *on the left, and next* CUNEDDA, DONN. *Only* CONNLA *is left standing.*]

CONNLA

Long is it since I have been with my brother, O King, and lonely were the days I passed without him; deeply I sorrowed for his sickness that granted me the right which now is his again. May I then sit beside him at the feast in proof of love?

KING

Seemly thy speech, O Connla, and thy request is granted.

[CONNLA *sits down beside* DERMOT.]

The royal house of Fergus is now one again! Let the feast begin!

[*Servants enter from left front, bearing a roasted boar on a large platter which is set before the* KING. *Other Servants go about with jugs, filling the guests' cups with mead.*]

DONN

[*Rising.*]
Carve the boar, O King!

[*He gives the* KING *a large knife, with which* FERGUS *cuts up the boar, the portions being distributed by the Servants.*]

CONNLA

[*Raising his cup.*]
I call upon ye all to drink to Dermot!

NOBLES

Victory and blessing upon thee, O Dermot!
[*They drink.*]

DERMOT

I give ye all thanks.

CUNEDDA

Wondrous thy deeds in the games, O Dermot! Well was thy sickness cured.

DERMOT

Skilled was the leech who tended me.

KING

Thou art more hardy than e'er before. Well didst thou win the race; although Cunedda, who finished nearest thee, has been trained by the High King, famed for skill and hardiness in war and sport.

DERMOT

And well, Cunneda, didst thou win with the javelin.

CUNEDDA

A sport I practised in mine own land ere I crossed the sea to Erin.

KING

I missed thee in the games, O Connla!

QUEEN

I was not well disposed, and bade my son stay with me here.

THIRD NOBLE

Wondrous thy sword feats, O Dermot!

SECOND NOBLE

I do not know thy sword. 'Tis not the one thou hadst a year ago?

DERMOT

A present of the King in whose court I was.

FIRST NOBLE

I looked upon the rock thou smotest; a mighty boulder that three horses scarce might move; yet was it split asunder.

DERMOT

Wondrous the temper of my sword; for cunning were the smiths who fashioned it.

THIRD NOBLE

E'en did it cut a tiny thing as well. I marked me when the bird flew by, scattering his feathers, thou clovest one of them in twain as it fell through the air.

QUEEN

Since thy sword can do such feats, canst cut the bee now flying round thine head in twain?

[DERMOT *turns round in a vain search for the bee. The* NOBLES *are watching him. He half draws his sword as he looks. By a quick movement,* CONNLA *spills wine from his goblet over* DERMOT'S *food unnoticed by any one but the* QUEEN.]

DERMOT

I see no bee.

QUEEN

Thou wast not quick enough; he darted by.

[DERMOT *turns to the table again. He tastes the wine on his food, and immediately leaves his plate untouched. He pretends to drink to cover his confusion which, however, the* QUEEN *notices.*]

QUEEN

The time must now be here, O Dermot, for thee to tell the story of thy healing.

DERMOT

Go thou, O Erc, and see if the sun be gone behind the top of Royal Mountain.

[FIRST NOBLE *rises and goes to window.*]

FIRST NOBLE

The sun is just now hidden, and the western sky is changed to many colors; the shadows lengthen on the mountain-side.

DERMOT

The hour is come, O King, when I must keep my word and tell ye all my story; but first I would summon the leech who healed me. Know, O King, that I am one of those blest mortals who has been to Fairyland.

KING

To Fairyland! And thou hast returned?

QUEEN

O Connla, did I not speak truth?

DERMOT

I have returned, O Father, because my duty is to reign. Well didst thou train me in the duties of a prince. I could not leave thee; though for a time I must bring grief unto thine heart.

KING

O son, my labors have not been in vain!

DERMOT

Yet, with all mortals who have found the Fairy world, I long again to travel thither; and chiefly since a maiden fairer than all mortal women waits me. Ere I speak further, wounding thine heart with a tale of baseness that must touch thee nearly, I would summon her; with whom I ride, when all this state is settled, back to Fairyland, to wed her at her father's court. Sweet Ethne, come!

[*He puts the horn to his lips and blows, but there is no sound despite his efforts. After a moment of respectful silence, the* NOBLES *break into derisive laughter.*]

SECOND NOBLE

Thou hast not breath enough; far is it to Fairyland.

FOURTH NOBLE

Methought I heard a sound.

FIFTH NOBLE

Being mortals merely, we may not hear the Fairy horn.

CONNLA

Thou sayest, brother, thou hast been to Fairyland, yet canst give no proof.

QUEEN

The Fairy horn was taken from our cow that died this morning.

SECOND NOBLE

Out with the imposter; he is not really well! Let him go back to Fairyland and bring us a sign!

[*Several* NOBLES *rise, go over to* DERMOT *and put their hands on his shoulder, as if to hurry him out of the hall. He sits dejected and unresisting in his place.*]

FIRST NOBLE

[*Rising.*]

I will not have him touched. To me all who will defend Prince Dermot!

[*A number of the* NOBLES *group themselves about him, crying,* "*I, I,*" *and* "DERMOT *forever!*"]

THIRD NOBLE

There is trickery abroad.

CONNLA

Out with him! I should have been chosen by the Druids had it not been for his tales. To me all who stand for justice in this land!

[*Several* NOBLES *group about* CONNLA, *crying, "Justice!" and* "CONNLA *forever!"*]

QUEEN

Well done, my son!

[*There is considerable clamor.*]

KING

Sound the horn for silence, O Donn!

[DONN *is unable to get across the hall in the confusion.*]

KING

Silence! Silence!

[*The* NOBLES *give no heed to the* KING, *who is about to step from the throne to interpose between the parties, when the door at the back opens, revealing* ETHNE *on the threshold, dressed as in the first Act. The sound of the door opening attracts the attention of those in strife. They pause, and are astonished by the sight of* ETHNE.]

ETHNE

What means the clamor in thine hall, O Fergus?

[*No one answers for a moment. The* NOBLES *unconsciously step aside, leaving a passage for* ETHNE *to advance towards the throne.*]

KING

[*After a pause, and slowly.*]

I now see wonders. The dreams of youth are made reality!

QUEEN

My strength is overthrown; the powers of Fairyland are come to help him.

DERMOT

[*Who has watched with rapture the arrival of* ETHNE.]

It is thou hast kept the tryst, O Ethne!

ETHNE

Now will I tell, O Fergus, all the tale
Of Dermot. Sit thou upon the throne once more;
There mayst thou best give judgment at the end.

[*The* KING *resumes his place on the throne. The* QUEEN *looks with frightened eyes on* ETHNE.]

KING

Say on, O maiden!

ETHNE

Thou seest Ethne, daughter to the King
Of Fairyland. Long did I love Prince Dermot;
And when I saw the spells Queen Buan wove
To win the kingship for her son, Prince Connla,
The magic sickness by her brought on Dermot—
I came in haste across the western sea,
And bore him with me to the Land of Youth.

KING

Queen Buan, a traitor to my bosom!

ETHNE

One final Fairy gift have I, power
To show thee and thy court the hearts of Buan
And Connla. Behold, and judge them justly now!

[*She shakes her wand with little bells. An expression of horror comes over the faces of the* KING *and* NOBLES.]

FIRST NOBLE

Blackness of heart, and all the practices of wickedness, I see!

SECOND NOBLE

Murderer, thy hands are stained with Domnall's blood!

[CONNLA *shrinks from several* NOBLES *who seize him.*]

THIRD NOBLE

Unnatural woman!

FOURTH NOBLE

Traitor to thy brother, thy doom is death!

FIFTH NOBLE

With trickery thou thoughtst to gain the throne that was thy brother's right.

KING

Lead hence Queen Buan and Prince Connla!

[*Several* NOBLES *seize the Queen.*]

To-morrow will I judge them; I may not defile the happiness of this meeting.

[NOBLES *go out left front, with* QUEEN BUAN *and* PRINCE CONNLA.]

QUEEN

[*As she is led off.*]

The vengeance of Balor and the powers of evil fall on ye all!

CONNLA

[*As he goes out.*]

False friends; for this have I paid ye gold!

[*During the following scene the* NOBLES *who have taken off the* QUEEN *and* CONNLA *return.*]

ETHNE

Now, justice done, I will complete my story.
On the happy meadows was Prince Dermot healed,
And there I won his love; yet could not win
His promise to remain with me forever.
The mortal call of duty sounded still
Upon his ears; he had not learned that Love
Is all, and Love and Duty one in Fairyland.

KING

Well hast thou proved thy father's trust, O Dermot!

ETHNE

Then, since he would return, my bugle horn
I gave him; bade him in his direst need
Blow thrice thereon. Straightway would I appear.
My father granted then his suit: consent
To come again to Fairyland and wed

With me; yet charged him he should touch no wine
Before the sun was set upon the day
That saw him in thine hall once more; to tell
No mortal of his healing, under pain
Of coming nevermore to Fairyland.

DERMOT

But I have tasted wine, and so am doomed.

ETHNE

Peace to thy fears, Belovèd; for the King,
My father, in his wisdom judged not thus.
The spirit of thy promise thou hast kept,
Broken the letter only. I am come,
A mortal woman, here to wed with thee,
Bearing my father's blessing. Fairy nature
Is mine no more. Because thou hast touch'd wine,
Never mayest thou return to Fairyland;
But I will stay henceforward in the world,
And by our love shall we be made immortal!

DERMOT

[*Embracing* ETHNE.]

By such love am I made immortal now! We shall reign together through the years; and, at the end, pass in the fullness of our time to the meadows we once have known; there live and love forever!

KING

O Ethne, a hundred thousand thanks were not enough for all that thou hast done! I am forever grateful to the Fairies, the unseen spirits who live to favor mortal men. I welcome thee and Dermot, giving him my throne, and to ye both my blessing. O nobles, choose now whom ye will have to reign!

NOBLES

[*With one voice.*]

We choose Prince Dermot!

KING

[*To Druids.*]

Ye have heard the nobles' choice, O Druids, and seen Prince Dermot safe and well from

Fairyland. Speak, that we know him free of blemish, and fit to reign according to the law!

FIRST DRUID

[*Coming before the throne.*]
We know him clean of sickness.

SECOND DRUID

Skilled is he in the learning of the land which we have taught him.

KING

O son, from this time forth I grant to thee my sceptre!

[*The* KING *comes down from the throne and kisses* DERMOT *and* ETHNE, *giving* DERMOT *his crown and sceptre, while the* NOBLES *acclaim* "KING DERMOT!" *The new* KING *and* QUEEN *take their places on the thrones.*]

Now will I leave thee with thy bride, O Dermot! Thy wedding shall be soon, and I proclaim a month of games and feasting in thine honor.

[*The* NOBLES *leave the hall by the back and left front, each bowing to* DERMOT *and* ETHNE. *When they have all departed,* DERMOT *turns to* ETHNE.]

DERMOT

Belovèd, they are gone; and I would put aside a monarch's state awhile. The moon must now be risen past the hill, and all the earth bathed in silver light. Let us look upon that scene of peace together.

[*They come down from their thrones.* DERMOT *places his arm round* ETHNE'S *waist, and they go to the door at back. When the door is open, the fields and distant mountains are seen shimmering in moonlight. The lovers pause, enraptured, on the threshold. From the distance a murmur of* FAIRY *voices, singing.*]

FAIRIES

Join hands again in the Fairy dance,
And away to the flow'ring lea,
Where the dew is cool
On our dancing feet,
And the breeze blows fresh from the sea.

The cares of the world to the world belong;
But Love is ours alway;
While the stars go out,
And the moon sinks down,
And day comes after day.
[*There is a momentary pause in the song.*]

ETHNE

The Fairies to the mountain-top are come
For dancing; I can almost hear their voices.
[*The song continues more faintly, dying away in the distance. As the curtain falls,* DERMOT *and* ETHNE *go out into the moonlight.*]

FAIRIES

Why reck we then of pain or woe,
Since Love is over all,
And Joy is born
In the heart of Love,
And Time is the lovers' thrall.

Join hands again in the Fairy dance,
And away to the meadows free!
Where the sun shines clear,
And the moon comes slow.
From the breast of the crooning sea.

CURTAIN

APPENDIX

In case an outdoor setting for Act II cannot be arranged, the stage may be set as follows:

SCENE.—*The throne room of the palace of the King of the Fairies. This should preferably be lit by artificial light (one account of the palace of the Fairy King describes it as illumined by a single diamond). Two thrones are arranged at the left. There are two doors on either side of the stage, and one at the back, leading into the outer air. There is also a window at the back, through which can be seen a glimpse of meadow with the sea in the distance.*

To suit this setting, the speech of the Fairy King on page 49, line 7, must be changed to read:

Without the palace door, knowing the way.

Of course by a few simple changes the whole play can be given outdoors.

A few suggestions in regard to costume and properties may be useful for those who have

not Joyce's "Social History of Ancient Ireland" accessible. The ancient Irish wore clothes of linen and woollen; but the upper classes were fond of silk and satin. All loved bright colors, and one of the kings made a regulation that the number of colors a man might wear should indicate his rank: a slave might wear one color, a farmer two, and so on up to kings, queens and high Druids, who might each wear six. Sons of chiefs are to be dressed in red, green or brown clothes, and those of inferior ranks in grey, yellow and black. The mantles of sons of inferior kings should be fastened with a silver brooch.

The most usual costume for the ancient Irishman engaged in outdoor life, seems to have been a loose tunic coming to the knee: the kilt originally came from Ireland. This tunic was generally dyed saffron. Over this might be worn a cape for the shoulders with or without a hood. Such a costume would be appropriate for the Princes and most of the nobles: indeed for all who could be classed as warriors. Instead of the short cape, the Druids, and some of the older men, might have a large, loose, though shaped cloak reaching to the knees or ankles,

and having a fringed border. This cloak may be all of one color, or spotted or striped with several colors. King Fergus might wear, instead of the cloak, a tight-fitting coat with sleeves and no collar, reaching to the middle of the thigh. Below this he would have the kilt. One or two of the characters, especially the older men, could wear trousers tight enough to show the shape of the leg, and fastened by a strap under the foot. The fighting men should wear sandals; others, and the women, shoes of soft leather similar to moccasins.

The women should wear a long gown or kirtle, and over this either the long cloak described above, or a tunic of many folds and much material, reaching to the feet.

The Nobles should be armed with swords in scabbards, and carry small wooden or wicker-work shields of from thirteen to twenty inches in diameter. Some of them could also carry spears.

The Irish trumpets were curved and made of bronze.

ETHNE'S SONG.

Music by ELLIOTT SCHENCK,

Moderato.

p Come with me to an - oth - er world

O - ver the hills and the sea: To an

is - land home by the waves en - curled, A

dim. e sost.

gold - en pal - ace with roof im - pearled, And

col - umns of por - phy - ry.

HITHER COMES THE FAIRY TRAIN.

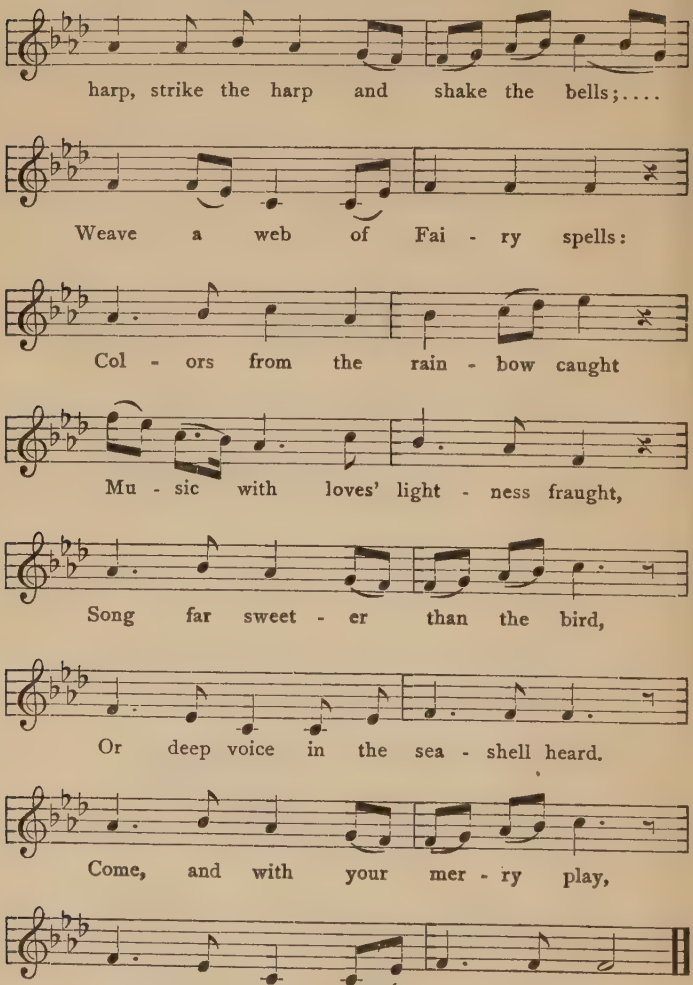
Irish Air.
Arr. by ELLIOTT SCHENCK.

Moderato.

mf Hith - er comes the Fai - ry train,

Round the roy - al throne a - gain. Strike the

HITHER COMES THE FAIRY TRAIN.—Concluded.



FAIRIES' SONG.

Irish Air.
Arr. by ELLIOTT SCHENCK.

Animato.

mf Join hands a-gain in the Fai-ry dance, And a-

way to the flow'ring lea, Where the dew is cool on our

danc-ing feet, And the breeze blows fresh from the

sea..... The cares of the world to the

world be-long; But love is ours al-

way; While the stars go out, and the

Sost.

moon sinks down, And day comes aft-ter day.

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